

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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FM AMEMBASSY SUVA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6060
INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, WS
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S VISIT TO WESTERN SAMOA

REF: A. WELLINGTON 1516, B) USDAO WELLINGTON DTG 260530Z APR 77.

1. THOUGH ALWAYS FRIENDLY, MY RECEPTION DURING THIS SEMI-ANNUAL VISIT TO WESTERN SAMOA, APRIL 14 - 19, WAS UNUSUALLY CORDIAL. FOLLOWING RECENT CONTROVERSY OVER U.S. MILITARY AIRLIFT OF AUTOMOBILES TO APIA, IT WAS CLEAR PRIME MIN TUPOULA EFI AND HIS MINISTERS DESIRED FORGET WHOLE MATTER, AND STRESS DESIRE STRENGTHEN FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH UNITED STATES.

2. WHEN I REPEATED OUR REGRETS OVER UNFORTUNATE PUBLICITY EMANATING FROM AMERICAN SAMOA ON AUTO AFFAIR, WHILE REEMPHASIZING THAT COSTS AND DIFFICULTIES FULLY EXPLAINED TO GOWS
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WHEN USG ASSISTANCE REQUESTED AND PRIOR TO PHASE OUT OF AUTOMOBILES, EFI INDICATED THAT PETULANT GOWS REACTION WAS EFFORT O SAVE FACE AFTER AMERICAN SAMOA BROADCASTS ON INCIDENT EMBARRASSED APIA. (NEEDLESS TO SAY PRIME MIN VERY AWARE IMUS-GULICK REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS NOT FINAL.)

3. IN FRIENDLY GESTURE, EFI URGED ME TO ATTEND WESTERN SAMOA'S

15TH INDEPENDENCE ANNIVERSARY JUNE 1ST, AND REQUESTED U.S. NAVAL VISIT FOR OCCASION. MOREOVER, FOLLOWING MY REMARKS AT FULLY-ATTENDED LUNCHEON I HOSTED FOR EFI AND CABINET, PRIME MIN WARMLY COMPLIMENTED ME AS U.S. REPRESENTATIVE TO ESTERN SAMOA. AS FINAL EXAMPLE OF EFI'S DESIRE TO ACCENT THE POSITIVE IN RELATIONS WITH U.S., HE WAS LAST TO LEAVE WELL-ATTENDED RECEPTION MY WIFE AND I HOSTED.

4. HEAD OF STATE, MALIETOA TANUMAFILI II, RECEIVED US CORDIALLY AS ALWAYS. HIS VISIT TO PRC LAST YEAR HAS MADE LASTING IMPRESSION AND HE CONSTANTLY REFERRED TO WHAT HE BELIEVES ABSENCE OF STARVATION IN COUNTRY OF 800 MILLION. ALTHOUGH MIFFED BY FAILURE OF QUEEN ELIZABETH TO RECEIVE HIM ON SAME TRIP, RECENT STATE VISIT OF QUEEN TO WESTERN SAMOA OBVIOUSLY HAS MADE AMENDS FOR OVERSIGHT.

5. I ALSO HAD CONSTRUCTIVE MEETINGS WITH MINISTER OF WORKS, HEALTH, AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS. I LEARNED DURING CALLS THAT SEVERAL PARLIAMENTARIANS INCLUDING SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE RECENTLY RETURNED FROM TOUR OF PRC AS GUEST OF GOVT, ARRANGED BY LOCAL CHINESE EMBASSY. PRC EMBASSY NOW NUMBERS SEVEN OCCUPYING RENTED QUARTERS IN ILPIA. MISSION PROFILE REMAINS QUITE LOW, AS I HAVE PREVIOUSLY REPORTED.

6. COMMENT: I CONSIDER VISIT ONE OF THE MOST SUCCESSFUL I HAVE MADE TO WESTERN SAMOA. RECENT CLOUDS OVER AUTOMOBILE CONTROVERSY HAVE COMPLETELY CLEARED. I FEEL STRONGLY WE SHOULD IMMEDIATELY ACKNOWLEDGE EFI'S STRENUOUS EFFORTS TO PLACE THIS INCIDENT BEHIND US, AND I BELIEVE A NAVAL VISIT (REFTELS) WOULD BE, IF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AT ALL POSSIBLE, AN IDEAL WAY OF DOING SO.
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Message Attributes

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